DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 374 151 TM 022 078

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|---|---|
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| TITLE | Does It Really Take a Whole Village To Raise a Child? Mixing Metaphor and Meaning in the Educational Partnerships Program. |
| INSTITUTION | Southwest Regional Lab., Los Alamitos, CA. |
| SPONS AGENCY | Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC. |
| PUB DATE | Apr 94 |
| CONTRACT | RP91161001 |
| NOTE | 26p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 4-8, 1994). |
| PUB TYPE | Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC02 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Community Influence; Educational Environment; Elementary Secondary Education; *Language Usage; *Metaphors; *Partnerships in Education; Program Development; *Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation |
| IDENTIFIERS | Aphorisms; Caring; *Educational Partnerships Program (OERI) |

ABSTRACT

In the course of evaluating the Educational Partnerships Program of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, researchers often heard the aphorism "It takes a whole village to raise a child." The village image appeared a powerful metaphor for program participants. This paper develops the hypothesis that the language and metaphors used by partners either facilitates or impedes the development, impact, and institutionalization of partnerships, depending on how accurately the language fits what actually occurs in the partnership. Following an introductory program description, the second section of the report summarizes study findings, emphasizing types of partnerships that achieved greatest success. The third section affirms that a good fit between metaphor and program activities, structures, and goals is associated with successful partnerships. Whether or not it takes the whole village depends on what is meant by raising the child. Productive workers can be prepared by a few dedicated community members, but a caring and nurturing environment may indeed require the whole village. One table and one figure illustrate the discussion. (Contains 15 references.) (SLD)

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American Educational Research Annual Meeting
New Orleans
April 1994

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# DOES IT REALLY TAKE A WHOLE VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD? MIXING METAPHOR AND MEANING IN THE EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

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American Educational Research Annual Meeting
New Orleans
April 1994

This publication is based on work sponsored wholly or in part by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) of the U.S. Department of Education under contract number RP91161001. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views of the Department nor any agency of the U.S. government.

# INTRODUCTION

The impetus for this paper comes from exchanges that occurred during the course of the documentation and evaluation of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement's (OERI's) Educational Partnerships Program. The study relied heavily on field-based research, and, while visiting sites, the field staff often heard: "You know, it takes a whole village to raise a child." This aphorism was presented by participants in partnerships with varying structures, educational objectives, program activities, and types of partners. It struck the field research team that the village image was a powerful metaphor in the minds of participants.

We also noted that some partnerships were more successful than others. Some, for example, were able to work through the inevitable problems of implementation and institutionalization while others were not. Some were able to achieve their objectives while others struggled to figure out what they were trying to accomplish. And some partnerships facilitated learning new relationships while others simply extended existing relationships.

Our analyses revealed a series of relationships among partnership structure, activities, outcomes, and degree of institutionalization. These analyses can be found in *Documentation and Evaluation of the Educational Partnerships Program: Year 2 Report*, which serves as the basis for this paper, but will not be repeated here. This paper is an effort to go beyond the data and analysis to present a broader perspective on educational partnerships. In contrast to reports emanating from the study that came from questions in terms of previous research on innovation and change, this paper develops a hypothesis that the language and metaphors used by partners either facilitate or impede the development, impact, and institutionalization of the partnerships, depending on how accurately the language fits what is actually occurring in the partnership.

The metaphor of the village evokes communitarian images, and, although I am critical of the use of communitarian images within the context of the Educational Partnerships Program (EPP), I am ***not*** attacking communitarianism, particularly in its most recent incarnation as embraced by Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipson (1991), Etzioni (1993), and Glendon (1991). As Michael Lerner asserts:

> We need to be part of loving families and ethically and spiritually grounded communities that provide a meaning for our lives that transcends the individualism and me-firstism of the competitive market....[We need] a paradigm shift from the discourse of materialism and selfishness to a discourse of caring and community. (1993, p. i)

This assertion, and the current communitarian "platform," are worthy of serious discussion concerning the contributions they might make to current problems—and the limitations inherent in them. But this paper is not the occasion of such a conversation. Rather, in the paper, I argue that the quest for meaning and rebuilding community may be valuable, but it has little to do with educational partnerships. In fact, the communitarian metaphor interfered with success as often as it helped it.

The Introduction of this paper includes an overview of the EPP, including a brief description of the funded partnerships. It also includes a discussion of the study's methodology. The second section summarizes findings from the study, emphasizing the types of partnerships that achieved the greatest success and the language used within those as contrasted to other, less successful, partnerships. In the third section, I return to the issue of metaphor, raising questions about the appropriate metaphors to describe the EPP projects and how the use of metaphors influence meaning and action. The paper concludes with some broader questions that return to the quest for meaning and community that underlies the constant use of the African proverb, "It takes a whole village to raise a child."

## The Educational Partnerships Program

The U.S. Congress enacted the Educational Partnerships Act of 1988 (as part of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988). The intent of the legislation was to stimulate the creation of partnerships between educational institutions and businesses. These partnerships were intended to: (a) work together on school improvement projects; (b) enrich career awareness of secondary and postsecondary students and provide exposure to the work of the private sector; and (c) encourage businesses to work with educationally disadvantaged and gifted students. Each partnership was to be evaluated by a project evaluator. In addition, a national study was undertaken to document the partnerships that receive assistance, assess the impact of those partnerships on educational institutions, evaluate the extent to which they improve their communities' climate for support of education, and identify promising practices. The national study, conducted by the Southwest Regional Laboratory (SWRL) and the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), goes beyond the simple evaluation question of whether funded projects met their own objectives. It questions program impact on the participating institutions and their communities. The broader question is whether partnerships (and the particular activities they sponsor) can be a force to renew education and encourage community support. This paper is based on the first two years of research on partnerships and the evaluation of the EPP.

The EPP and the national study are administered by the Educational Networks Division, Programs for the Improvement of Practice, OERI, U.S. Department of Education. At the time SWRL and IEL conducted the data collection and analysis that undergirds this paper, OERI had funded four cycles of partnership projects, and 29 were in existence. The projects differ in structure, objectives, and local evaluation designs. They included partnerships designed to: (a) facilitate the transition from school to work; (b) improve instruction in mathematics and science; (c) provide opportunities for gifted students, those at risk of school failure, and noncollege bound students; and (d) stimulate systemic reform. The partnerships include a variety of configurations of business, industry, cultural institutions, health and human service agencies, institutions of higher education, state education agencies, and public elementary and secondary schools. Most were funded for three to four years.

### *Summary of Project Characteristics*

The 29 EPP projects differ in many ways. In this section, their characteristics are summarized. First, the major programmatic foci are described. Second, descriptions of the structures of the partnerships are offered. The discussion of structures uses a series of metaphors that were inductively derived from interviews, document review, and observations of activities. These images will be returned to in the third part of the paper.

### Programmatic Foci

The programmatic foci of the funded partnership programs can be classified in two ways. One approach is to organize the discussion according to the curriculum content of the partnership. Another is to focus primarily on the client groups that benefit from partnership activities. In the following section, both schemes are used. However, some projects are difficult to classify according to either system because they aim at major reforms of the educational system. Such "systemic-change" programs included multiple client groups and curriculum content areas. Systemic change projects are included in both schemes and discussed as a separate category.

Table 1 summarizes the programmatic characteristics of the projects.

*Curriculum.* The 29 projects funded by the EPP focused on three curricular areas. Eight projects (28%) had a primary focus on mathematics and science; 12 (41%) on the transition from school to adult responsibility, including career education; and two (7%) on alternative education programs. The curriculum content of the other two crossed many areas.

Within the math/science area, there were markedly different goals and related approaches. Of the eight projects, six were primarily concerned with improving curriculum and instruction. In those projects, partners developed and adapted curriculum and participated in staff development to engage students in more challenging mathematics and science curriculum. In the other two, objectives centered on encouraging more students to choose math/science/technology careers and included such elements as internships in scientifically oriented businesses, assignment of mentors from the science and technology program, and visiting scientist programs. In short, one approach involved changes in core areas of schools and the other, a variety of add-ons to the school program.

**Table 1**
*Programmatic Foci*

| | Curriculum | | | Client | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Project | Math/ science | School to adult | Alternative education | At risk | Gifted | Dropout | Noncollege | Systemic change |
| A | | | X | | | X | | |
| C | | | | X | X | | | X |
| D | | X | | | | | | |
| E | X | | | | | | | X |
| F | | | X | X | | | | |
| G | | X | | | X | | | |
| H | X | | | X | | | | X |
| I | | X | | X | | | X | |
| J | X | | | | | | | |
| K | | X | | X | | | X | |
| L | X | | | X | | | | |
| M | | | | X | X | | | |
| N | X | X | | | | | | |
| O | | X | | | | | X | X |
| P | (Unclassified) | | | | | | | X |
| Q | | | | X | | | | |
| R | | X | | X | | | X | |
| S | | X | | X | | | | |
| T | | X | | | | | X | |
| U | | X | | X | | X | | |
| V | X | | | | | | | |
| W | | | | | | | | X |
| X | | X | | X | | | X | |
| Y | X | | | | | | | |
| Z | | | | | | | | X |

*table continues*

| | Curriculum | | | Client | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Project | Math/ science | School to adult | Alternative education | At risk | Gifted | Dropout | Noncollege | Systemic change |
| AA | X | | | | | | | |
| BB | (Unclassified) | | | | | | | |
| CC | | | | | | | | X |
| DD | | X | | X | | | | |

The 12 school-to-work transition programs also differed. Although all groups had students leaving schools for community-based experiences such as job shadowing or internships, only four changed the school curriculum to emphasize specific careers. Three of these sponsored "career academies"—schools-within-schools that structure the major portion of student experience around teaching the content required for success in a particular career, thus exposing the student to the world of work. The others were "tech-prep" or "2+2" programs, articulating high school and postsecondary work.

The alternative education programs constituted full school days that served the needs of school dropouts or potential dropouts.

*Target groups.* Partnerships focused on particular target groups. The largest number of projects (13 or 45%) served mainly at-risk or educationally disadvantaged students. Another group of partnerships (6 or 20%) focused on the noncollege bound or the "forgotten half." Finally, three groups (10%) focused on the gifted and another three on dropouts or potential dropouts. Three partnerships included all students in the area served. The curriculum content for each of the groups varied, with both gifted and at-risk students receiving career education and math/science opportunities. Dropouts and potential dropouts were involved in alternative education and career education.

*Systemic change.* Nine projects (31%) are attempting to bring about systemwide changes through the educational partnership. In these projects, the specific content area addressed or client group served is less important than efforts to change governance, relationships, and the nature of curriculum and instruction. Although they include math, science, career education, and other curriculum areas, curriculum is used to change how students and teachers relate to one another and to encourage "active learning" on the part of students. Further, community experiences for

students and teachers are designed to change how community members and school people relate to one another and to allow for mutual influence. For example, they may involve integrating social services into the school. Finally, decisionmaking processes are changed, generally to include more individuals from both within the schools and the community.

**Partnership Structure**

The descriptions of partnership structures use metaphors drawn from politics, business, and organizational theory. We developed these quick descriptions after the first year of the study to communicate differences among the partnerships. As the fourth section of this paper indicates, however, the images our metaphors evoke are different from the images called forth by local rhetoric. We do not assert that our metaphors are better, but note, rather, that the level of project success is related to consonance between the structure and local rhetoric. This finding is empirical. In fact, we were not aware of the importance of the metaphors until we began to analyze data from the second year of the study.

*Primary partner/limited partner.* Primary and limited partner arrangements involve a managing partner who works with organizations that provide services either to the primary partner or to clients. The limited partners are conceptually similar to consultants, and the lead organization is distinguished by its role as the coordinator of partnership activities. The language is drawn from business in which "limited partnerships" are a common phenomena. This is the most common type of partnership, represented by 50% of all funded partnerships.

*Coalition.* Coalitions involve a division of labor among organizations. Each partner carries out particular activities and decides what to do within a broad framework articulated by the partnership as a whole. Partners are equal, but bring different interests and skills to the arrangement. In some cases, a coalition is like children's "parallel play"; in others, it resembles political campaigns. The language, of course, comes from the realm of politics in which shifting coalitions mark the nature of a pluralistic democracy. Political metaphors were rarely used by partnership participants.

Coalitions represent 25% of all partnerships. In addition, one partnership changed from a primary/limited partnership to a coalition, but another partnership moved from a coalition to a collaborative.

*Collaboration.* Collaboration also involves a division of labor among equal partners; however, decisionmaking is continuous and shared among partners. Each partner is empowered to participate in all decisions. The partnership becomes an organization itself. The language is drawn

from organizational theory. For some, collaboration, with its implication of equality, is the hallmark of partnerships. When discussing collaboration, partnership participants often drew analogies to marriages. They seldom use the metaphor of a large law firm, with senior and junior partners and associates. Collaboration describes 25% of the partnerships.

*Conclusion.* The typology does not assume that partnerships move through stages, from primary partner/limited partner to collaboration. Nor does it assume that collaborations are superior forms of arrangements likely to have greater impact than the others. However, the changes in structure we observed tend to support a developmental view, although the numbers of partnerships that changed structure is so small that caution is urged in interpreting the results.

The structure of the partnership is related to whether there is segmented or whole implementation. Primary/limited partnerships are fully implemented in only 25% of the cases, while both coalitions and collaborations are fully implemented in two thirds of the cases. Put another way, only one of the fully implemented partnership projects has a primary partner/limited partner structure; 25% of them are coalitions; and 62% are collaborative in structure.

## Study Design and Methodology

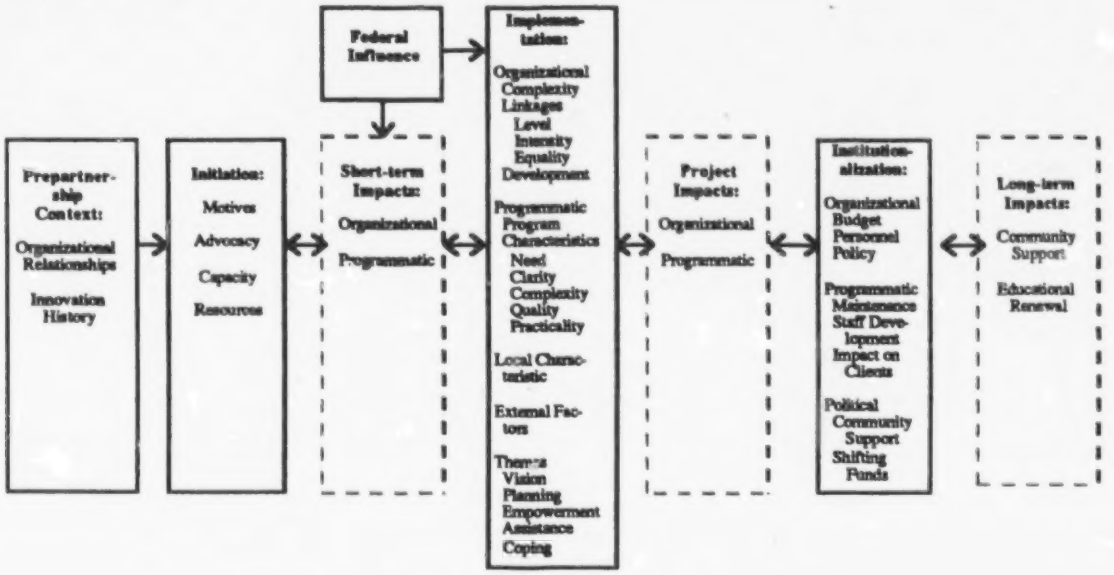
The evaluation uses a conceptual framework drawn largely from the research on innovation and change. From this perspective, the partnerships are an innovation with two distinct aspects. First, the partnerships are an innovation in *organizational arrangements*. Second, the partnerships develop and implement *programmatic innovations*. The two perspectives are important in analyzing the relationships among partnership structure, activities, implementation, and impact.

Studying educational partnerships using the framework is particularly appropriate because educational partnerships began as a means to improving education. Further, the argument is that school people require the political support, resources, and expertise that partnerships bring to public education to make the necessary changes (Hood, 1991). Looking at the projects funded by the EPP as innovative interorganizational arrangements facilitates understanding of the ways in which businesses and community-based organizations can support school reform.

The programmatic perspective is equally important. Educational partnerships range from those that provide targeted support for at-risk students, opportunities for teacher summer employment, and materials and equipment to schools that have been "adopted" to those that aim at "systemic" reform. The EPP has provided funding to projects that exhibit the full range of programmatic characteristics. Consequently, the framework's concern with the relationship between the interorganizational innovation and the program innovation is appropriate to the study.

The conceptual framework guiding the study is displayed in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**
*Conceptual Framework*




The conceptual framework alerted us to view educational partnerships as developing over time. Just as change in educational programs is a process, so is change in the relationships between and among organizations. A developmental perspective signals the need to look at changes over time on the organizational dimension, as well as on the programmatic level. In this paper, the developmental perspective provides backing for assertions about how metaphors and rhetoric influenced the implementation, impact, and institutionalization of the partnerships.

The study employs data triangulation; that is, collecting information from multiple sources using multiple methods. We collected descriptions of activities from project-generated documents; interviews with project staff, staff from participating institutions, and the recipients of services; and through observations of the activities. We sought various perspectives on partnership practices, activities, and structures, thereby triangulating interpretations of the meanings of what occurred within the settings. Because the partnerships represent social phenomena, participants often had different views of events and structures. For example, one partnership sponsored a school-to-work transition program involving internship opportunities for students. The representative from the participating business organization who coordinated the internships gave the high school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principal a list of students at the start of the year. When the business coordinator showed up on a particular day, ready to take the students to their placements, the principal refused to release them, saying that parents had not given permission for that day nor had teachers been notified. From the business coordinator's perspective, this event indicated the closed, bureaucratic nature of schools. From the perspective of the high school principal, it demonstrated the business's lack of understanding of a school's need to protect students and the potential for liability claims. Understanding differences in interpretations of events contributes to understanding how partnerships develop.

Information was collected on site by two-person teams that visited for three days and was synthesized by the site-visit team following its visit. Team members reread interview transcripts, notes from observations, and project documents, coding information according to the conceptual framework. They prepared an interpretive summary of their findings that served two purposes: First, it provided a concise statement of the progress and problems of a particular funded partnership, and contained tentative analyses of the partnership's status and hypotheses about relationships among its structure, activities, and success. Second, it focused future data collection efforts through those hypotheses.

In a staff meeting, site visitors reviewed the interpretive summaries to develop what Yin (1989) calls "causal arguments" both within and across cases. Frequently, discussions of relationships among activities or structures led us to reexamine the original data, including project documents and interview transcripts. The causal arguments were used to identify the existence of phenomena in more than one case under predictable conditions.

The analytic meetings followed procedures recommended by Miles and Huberman (1984; 1994). They note that qualitative data analysis involves "three concurrent flows of activities" (p. 21). The first flow is data reduction, "the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming" the information from field notes and documents. This involves the coding and interpretive summaries. In some cases, it was useful to quantify phenomena. For example, we were interested in the number of partnerships with particular types of structures and leadership styles.

The second set of activities involved developing "displays," which include matrices, networks, and narrative text. In the analysis, we developed displays for each project based on the conceptual framework. We then built a cross-case analysis by comparing and contrasting the displays. As a result, we identified the patterns and relationships that form the basis of this report.

The final activities recommended by Miles and Huberman (1984) are drawing conclusions and verifying them. The displays themselves are tentative "conclusions" about relationships. They are, in fact, causal arguments. At this stage, we have verified the relationships within the projects, against the literature, and across projects.

# FINDINGS

This section highlights findings from the documentation and evaluation of the EPP that are relevant to the issue of language and metaphor. More complete descriptions of study findings can be found in *Documentation and Evaluation of the Educational Partnerships Program: Year 2 Report* (Tushnet et al., 1993). The findings are presented here according to the conceptual framework.

## Initiation

Most EPP projects were initiated to address particular problems in the locality served, although there were some disagreements among partners about what the crucial problems were and how best to address them. Of the 29 projects underway, 18 were initiated to solve problems. Another 7 projects were mixed; that is, one or more partners initiated the project to address a need while other partners entered opportunistically, mainly to gain access to federal funds. The four opportunistic projects experienced early implementation problems, and, with the mixed projects, implementation was either slow or extremely segmented.

Prior to applying for funds, potential (or existing) partners carried on conversations with the organizations they wished to involve in the project. These conversations, if they existed, focused on two issues. The first was the role of the partner and the second, the programmatic content of the partnership project. In 14 (48%) partnerships, conversations about roles included all partners; in 11 (38%), only some of the partners; and in 4 (14%), the staff of the organization applying for funds met with other partners individually. In no case was full implementation achieved without involving all organizations. Discussions about the roles of partners are necessary, but not sufficient. In those partnerships that held conversations about roles, two did not address content. Neither is fully implemented.

During these conversations, participants communicated expectations about the partnership. Such expectations were conveyed not only in direct and rational terms, but through the rhetoric, including metaphors, used. When the rhetoric matched the expectations about the roles individuals would play and the program activities they would implement, partnership development was facilitated. When there was a mismatch between words and actions, there were problems. For example, one partnership involving an institution of higher education, a high technology organization, and an urban school district used the language of community. However, the corporation, by policy, did not "give" equipment to schools, providing technical support instead, and the university placed time limits on its assistance to teachers who were attempting to integrate the new technology into unfamiliar ways of teaching. The actions seemed more like a "deal" than a

community—in what village does one person say to another: "I'll help you for only two years and I won't help you in particular ways?" One wonders if the language used had been drawn from business, accurately describing the "deal" that lay at the base of the partnership, whether participating teachers would have accepted the limitations with less affect. In contrast, the partnerships that focused on school-to-work transition used language from business, including "training" and "contracts." Those projects were more apt to be successful than others.

## Implementation

Implementation is not an all or nothing condition. Partnerships can be fully implemented or partially implemented, the latter being more common, particularly in the early stages of partnership development. Implementation is a complex social process of putting in place changes in policy and/or practice that affect and are affected by the organizational features and programmatic activities of the partnerships. As such, communication is central to implementation (Fullan, 1991).

Implementation was achieved when people in charge of carrying out program activities knew what to do, how to do it, and were provided with the resources to maintain their understanding throughout the implementation process. Clearly, early, open conversations, consensus building, and the use of a commonly understood language fostered implementation.

Partnerships that were only partially implemented in the first year of the study moved toward full implementation in the second year. There was an increase of 21% of the fully implemented partnership projects between 1992 and 1993. For the most part, the difference was accounted for by the move from the segmented implementation of partnerships that were organizationally fully implemented, but not implemented programmatically, to full implementation of both types. The strong organization seems to have been a critical factor in supporting full implementation because it provided an arena for discussing differences in interpretations of intention, disappointments in partners' performance, changing expectations, and needs for greater support for those making program changes.

Five of the 13 fully implemented projects focus on the transition from school to work. Four focus on the improvement in or development of mathematics/science curriculum or programs through comprehensive teacher training accompanied by ongoing classroom support, in-class support from trained volunteers, or team teaching. The remaining 4 partnerships vary in focus, although none claim to address systemic reform.

In fully implemented partnerships, all participants were clear about the roles they were to play. Such role clarity was achieved through planning so individuals knew the "what" of

implementation, accompanied by support in the activities embraced by the program, so they knew the "how." Particularly with regard to planning, shared understanding (and a common rhetoric) was important.

## Impacts

The EPP partnerships have varied goals, objectives, and participants. Consequently, assessing the impact of the program involves two types of analysis. First, the evaluation includes judgment of how partnerships contribute to improved school and student outcomes. Student outcomes are defined broadly and include improved academic performance, changes in attitudes toward school and particular curriculum areas, better understanding of the demands of work, increased numbers of students seeking higher education, increased numbers of students with jobs, and decreased numbers of school dropouts. School outcomes include changes in how decisions are made, improvements in instruction, and improved articulation between levels of education.

Second, in addition to assessments of the impact of the program on students and schools, partnerships are intended to improve support for education in the community and the state. One way of viewing this is to assess the impact of partnership participation on business and other nonschool partners.

### *Impact on Students and Schools*

Thus far, the type of projects resulting in the greatest impacts on students were those that involved school-to-work transition activities. Equally successful, but on a smaller scale, were dropout prevention and reclamation programs.

Partnerships addressing two types of substantive issues have had, to date, less impact than others. First, despite high levels of implementation, it has been difficult to discover the impact of partnerships addressing curriculum change. Second, although at least 15 schools, and likely more, were engaged in changed decisionmaking processes at the school site, the quality of implementation of site-based management and shared decisionmaking was uneven so it is impossible to determine impact at this point. And, although shared decisionmaking schools also use the language of community, in this case a community within a school, so far they seem unable to have the measurable impacts they wish. Perhaps it is inappropriate to think of school communities in terms of instrumental outcomes. I will return to this issue in the conclusion.

Implementation and impact are related, with 58% of high-impact projects being fully implemented. However, implementation is not enough for achieving high impact.

### *Impact on Communities and Businesses*

At EPP partnership sites, few community members not involved in the partnerships were even aware of the existence of the projects. If the partnerships were spurring the creation (or re-creation) of villages, they were villages limited in their membership! One clear indication that partners did not really mean what they said about creating communities is their assertion that they wanted to have success before going public. Such concern with image reflects a less organic, more bureaucratic view of the world.

Partnerships had limited impact on participating businesses. Only anecdotal information currently exists because most partnerships did not view such impact as important. However, there were frequent reports that providing employees with release time to volunteer raised morale and productivity beyond other measures taken by businesses. Indeed, one volunteer, a first-line manager in a retail store, indicated in an interview that she found her partnership-sponsored tutoring so fulfilling that if she felt "burn out" as a result of carrying both her job and the volunteer work, she'd quit the job before giving up the classroom work. Interviews with volunteers, more than anything else in the study, revealed the quest for "communities of meaning" that Lerner (July/August 1992) describes.

## Institutionalization

Central to the study of the EPP is analyzing whether the partnerships and activities they sponsor are becoming part of the normal operations of the schools and communities. Our study examined the three aspects of institutionalization identified in the initial conceptual framework. First, we analyzed whether the activities sponsored by the partnership were becoming part of the daily lives of participants. Second, our analysis focused on the institutionalization of the commitments of partner organizations. This involved asking such questions as whether partners had changed policies and practices to ensure ongoing involvement in the partnership or in activities sponsored by the partnership. For example, one business changed its policies to enable parents to involve themselves in their children's education. The business both provides employees who are parents with release time to attend parent-teacher conferences and hosts school planning meetings at the work site during the work day to encourage parent participation. Third, the study analyzed whether the partnership structure was institutionalized.

The OERI-funded partnerships show signs of institutionalizing aspects of their activities and partners. As the partnerships face their last years of federal funding, 70% have institutionalized

significant numbers of activities, with 35% achieving high or full institutionalization. Academically oriented activities have been institutionalized more than others.

Only 25% of the partnerships experienced commitment to the structure. The highest degree of institutionalization, of any of the three types, occurred with schools and school districts. That is, schools not only institutionalized activities, but also made the most long-term commitments to the partnerships. This finding can be read in a positive way, indicating that schools are willing to work with others to improve. It also can be read more negatively, indicating either that outside agencies will disappoint school people in the long run, that schools are too hard to deal with for the long haul, or that business and other agency commitment to education is limited. Another interpretation is neutral—schools see the benefits from partnerships fairly early; other organizations need time and success to commit their energies to education.

Whatever the reading, we were struck by this finding. In fact, it pushed us to examine the use of rhetoric to see whether metaphors influenced institutionalization. At this point, we think that one issue is the miscommunication of intentions and expectations embedded in the language used as compared to the actions taken.

# METAPHORS AND MEANING

The commonly used aphorism, "It takes a whole village to raise a child," calls forth images of community. It refers, in the terms of Max Weber, to *gemeinshaft*, referring to personalistic, almost organic relationships. In contrast, "partnership" calls forth images of business, *gesellshaft* in Weber's terms, in which relationships are rationalized through formal arrangements. Webster (1991) defines partnership as:

> 1. the state of being a partner; participation; 2. the relationship of partners; joint interest; association 3. a) an association of two or more partners in a business enterprise b) a contract by which such an association is created c) the people so associated. (p. 985)

Because some people view partnerships as marriages, with as many affectional as legal ties, the contrast among the imagery of the village and the structures, processes, and content of the successful partnership efforts is more important than the simple contrasts in language. This section explores the use of metaphor by contrasting more successful partnerships with less successful ones. It argues that partnerships that misuse metaphors are less likely to succeed than those that appropriately match metaphor and the meaning of their action.

In this section, I will present four examples, each representative of the more general findings presented above, to make the point. These examples accurately reflect findings from the study. The first example is one in which the metaphors used evoke *gesellshaft* imagery, and the partnerships that use them are successfully implementing their activities and moving toward institutionalization of the activities and the partnership structures. The second example is one in which the village metaphor *(gemeinshaft)* predominated, but the activities and relationships were contractual *(gesellshaft)* in nature. The project, although fairly well-implemented, is unlikely to be institutionalized. The third example is of a project that used the village metaphor, and actually attempted to build a "village" around students who had dropped out of school. The impact and likelihood of institutionalization of that project are high. The fourth example is of a project aimed at systemic reform. I have included this example because it is one of the few in which participants used political metaphors. It also speaks to a fundamental issue about the metaphor of village not addressed in the others.

As the cross-project analyses indicated, the types of partnerships most likely to be successfully implemented involved school-to-work transitions. In these, schools, institutions of higher education, and businesses created a series of "contracts," many of which were formal, to carry out project activities. For example, a major subset of school-to-work projects involved

"Tech-Prep" or "2+2" programs. Implementations of such programs involved the development and signing of formal articulation agreements between secondary schools, community and technical colleges, and four-year institutions of higher education. Business participation also was quite formal. In part, the formality of the arrangements arose from necessity: Students left school campuses to pursue internships or job-shadowing experiences, and the schools require a "paper trail" to deal with potential liability problems. When such partnerships hit snags, as all partnerships did, the partners talked about "renegotiating" their arrangements.

The business metaphor for "partnership" is appropriate for the school-to-work transition projects. The metaphor fits the nature of the interactions between and among partners. It sets appropriate expectations for what will occur and how problems will be dealt with. Further, it fits the way the business partners are accustomed to operating.

In contrast, one partnership that is similar to most of the curriculum-focused partnerships and involves an institution of higher education, urban school district, and a high technology company created expectations that partners say they did not mean to create. (As noted above, partnerships of this type were generally well-implemented but showed limited signs of institutionalization.) The partnership has successfully worked with a group of teachers who have implemented exciting and challenging curriculum and instruction for inner-city students. Their efforts have had an impact on how participating teachers view their students and their work, moving toward more student-centered teaching. However, neither the university nor the high technology company plans to remain in the relationship after federal funding ceases. One teacher, who sees herself as "just beginning to understand how to use the stuff," asserted that she needs an ongoing relationship with the partners. She said that if the partners "pulled out," she would "feel as if I've been ripped off." Another teacher stated, "They said they wanted to build a new 'learning community.' What kind of community is it if they leave at the end of three years?" (Actually, the partnership grant ran for four years, but she was only involved for three.)

From the perspective of the nonschool partners, however, their time-limited involvement fits what they set out to do. The business representative said, "We can't afford to keep providing this high a level of service as a donation. We'll do what we can *because we entered into a contract,* but it can't be forever" (emphasis added). And at the university, participants, who also used the village metaphor, asserted that they had begun the process, but the goal was to empower teachers to create their own community, not to extend the community to include the university. One can almost hear the teachers responding, "So the whole village is just us? That's not what we thought you meant." Further, the use of the term "empowerment" raises new, political images—and the

differences among the communitarian, business, and political metaphors seem to contribute to the mismatched expectations.

The final example is of a dropout reclamation program. The partnerships that focused on preventing school dropouts and/or reclaiming youth who already had dropped out had equal levels of impact on their target clients as school-to-work transition partnerships and are likely to be institutionalized. In general, the approach of these projects is to surround the students with services and individual attention. The dropout reclamation project, for example, serves a limited number of students (no more than 60) at a time. The students receive individualized instruction through a computer-managed instructional system, counseling both in groups and individually, assistance with finding part-time jobs, and access to health and other human services. The partners are the school district, a fast-food franchise, and the municipal health department, with representatives of organizations, including the mall in which the school is located, the YWCA, banks, a local supermarket chain, a shelter for runaway youth, and a rental car agency involved in partnership activities.

The project uses the village metaphor quite successfully. Although formal agreements are in place, the relationships among partners are nurtured through personal contact by key staff members from the school district and the franchise. Students report that they feel "cared about." One young women, from an extremely troubled home, said, "The people here are compassionate." And a representative from the franchise reported that she "operates by calling people up to get help. Like the graduation, I called the Elks to get the hall for free, (supermarket chain) to get the food, and the kids asked some friends to play music." Similarly, the "school" was modified and furnished by a local home-improvement store because the project director asked the manager for help.

The project has not solved all problems. The curriculum, for example, is judged inadequate by school district personnel. Nonetheless, students are attending school, returning to regular school, and graduating. Approximately 15% of the students served by the project graduated from high school, and another 30% complete at least one full year in the school. The youth served are difficult to reach because they have been out of school for at least six months prior to enrollment. Many are adjudicated youth and even more have run away from home. The success rate is notable.

Partners who developed the "school-in-the-mall," as local participants refer to it, both talk about the "whole village raising a child" and create a village-like community for the youth they serve. Although some partners complain a bit about the "informality" of the partnership and argue that it should be more "business like," participants all seem willing to maintain their commitment. The school district, health department, and franchise have institutionalized their involvement.

The examples so far illustrate a major point: Partnership success is associated with the use of metaphors that fit the activities, structure, and style of the project. Neither communitarianism nor rationalism guarantees successful partnerships. But using communitarian images for rationalistic relationships either creates or is symptomatic of a problem.

The final example is of a partnership aimed at systemic reform. It is located in a small, rust-belt city, and involves over 30 business, civic, health, and social service agencies. After a somewhat rocky start, the partnership is on a path toward successful implementation of a wide range of programs, including a professional development school; a series of "centers of excellence," which focus student experiences on particular occupational clusters, such as health or finance; a parent center at an elementary school; and a number of high-technology-oriented school-to-work transition projects. The partnership, which includes the city and surrounding county school districts, began by focusing primarily on the city schools. At this point, many activities, including the development of a model high technology school, are taking place in the county schools. Further, the partnership, particularly its staff, supported a series of public forums about education. These forums were based on staff's analysis that jobs of the future will demand new kinds of workers, and that the schools must change to prepare students for the new workplace. The forums were intended to build public support for systemic reform.

Different metaphors are invoked by different participants in the partnership. The staff and those most concerned with the school-to-work transition use the language of business and politics. The forums, for example, were spoken of as a "campaign." A few individuals are concerned that the partnership may be supplanting the authority of the school boards, particularly the city school board, and point out that the leadership of the partnership is "white," while the city's political and educational leadership is African American. The individuals most concerned with parent involvement, including members of the steering committee representing the minority community, talk in more communitarian terms. At this point, the multiple metaphors seem to work, but partnership staff want to develop a coherent "vision" for systemic reform. If the staff succeeds in creating that vision, there is likely to be some stress within the partnership.

This systemic reform partnership is one that uses language and metaphors from politics. It also is one in which issues of power, authority, and voting blocs are important.

# CONCLUSION: DOES IT REALLY TAKE A WHOLE VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD?

This paper represents an effort to explore the use and effect of metaphor in educational partnerships, using the 29 projects funded through OERI's EPP as a basis for the discussion. When I returned to the data from two years of the three-year documentation and evaluation study, I found the issue was not which metaphor—*gemeinshaft* or *gesellshaft*—captured the meaning of educational partnerships. Rather, the use of metaphors appropriate to the activities, structures, and goals of the partnership was associated with successful outcomes and institutionalization. Lack of match between metaphor and the meaning of partners' actions was either symptomatic or causal of problems that interfere with successful institutionalization.

So, does it take a whole village to raise a child? From the evidence from the EPP, the answer is, "It depends on what you mean by "raising a child." If "raising a child" means preparing young people in instrumental ways to be productive workers, it does *not* take a whole village. The success of very businesslike school-to-work transition programs indicate that a series of contracts among a limited number of community members can prepare productive workers. But if "raising a child" means creating a caring, nurturing environment, then it may.

The metaphors we use to guide our actions demonstrate deeper understandings and aspirations than the mere words. One set of such metaphors contrasts two types of connections:

> ...the bonds that knit human relationships together as bonds of attachment. They spin visions of the ties between persons, which can best be suggested by the metaphors of webs and nets. Webs and nets imply opposing capacities for snaring or entrapment and for rescuing or safety....
>
> In contrast, the self premised in autonomy sees individuals relating through bonds of agreements, such as contracts, laws, and the like. Their metaphors for suggesting the world are more often images of pyramids and mountains. (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Taule, 1984, pp. 178-179)

In the EPP, participants frequently used the language of attachment (the village) to describe controversial relationships. But the issue goes beyond the appropriate use of metaphors in partnerships when we talk about what it means to "raise a child" and the role of schools in that process in a somewhat different light. Astuto, Clark, Read, McGee, and Fernandez (1993) argue that the process of reform must shift the framework from, among other concerns, "instrumentality to entitlement" and "bureaucracy to democracy." They argue that we should no longer use

"economic prosperity and social stability" as the "test of success of an educational system" (p. 111). Rather, we should give up such instrumentality because:

> ...like, liberty, and pursuit of happiness [is] guaranteed to all American children. Education's first responsibility is to ensure the entitlement to the young to the best society has to offer and to serve as an agent of societal improvement and transformation. Instrumentality dooms not just children but society to be no better than it is. (p. 111)

Astuto et al. (1993) also argue for the need to change the structure of schools:

> Organizational structures and processes consistent with democracy replace domination with freedom and individualism with collective obligation and trust. Organizing schools as communities of difference in a pluralistic society requires the invention of democratic mechanisms that promote individual rights within a cooperative environment of public and social responsibility. (pp. 114-115)

In addition, the issue of whether one thinks it takes a whole village to raise a child depends on the nature of the village. As Belenky et al. (1986) point out, the metaphor of web and net includes images of entrapment as well as safety. The village that raises the children should not entrap them in a web of unequal relationships. Writing about the communitarian image that Etzioni (1993) embraced, Derber (July/August 1993) speaks of its "core deficits":

> ...[it] is startlingly blind to the major structural economic and political transformation necessary to create a real option of community for ordinary Americans. Ultimately, the unraveling of the social fabric is rooted in the radically individualistic market system...there can be no communitarian haven until we recast that system in a radically new "kinder and gentler" foundation. (p. 30)

Educational partnerships, as exemplified through the EPP, seldom address the issues of structural inequality. Indeed, partnerships aimed at systemic reform, such as the one cited above, may actually work to reinforce current social and economic arrangements. Consequently, even when they appropriately use communitarian metaphors, they may fail to achieve the highest aspirations of their supporters.

In short, although it may take the whole village to raise a child, it does little good—for the child or the society—for the village to reproduce social and economic inequalities through its child-rearing practices.

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